



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, EUROPE, AND SEVENTH ARMY
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
UNIT 29058
APO AE 09081

AEAAG

JUN 20 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Army in Europe Retiree Council Minutes

1. The minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council meeting on 12 May 2004 have been reviewed and approved.
2. The point of contact for this memorandum is the Army in Europe Retirement Services Officer at DSN 379-6080 or email: usareur-rso@hq.1perscom.army.mil.

JON E. FINKE
COL, AG
Adjutant General

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EA ASG/BSB
EA USAREUR ASG/BSB RSO
EA USAREUR Retiree Council Member



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AEAAG-AERC

18 May 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanding General, United States Army, Europe, and Seventh Army,
ATTN: AEACG, Unit 29351, APO AE 09014

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council Meeting

1. The 91st meeting of the Army in Europe Retiree Council (AERC) convened in the conference room of the DCofS, G1, USAREUR, Campbell Barracks, Heidelberg, at 0900 hours on 12 May 2004.

2. The following persons were present:

a. Voting Members:

COL (Ret) Robert A. Mentell	President
COL (Ret) Alan B. Phillips	Vice President
CW3 (Ret) Sandra K. Simpson	Secretary
COL (Ret) Steven V. Boylan	Member
LTC (Ret) Sheldon Dick	Member
1SG (Ret) Donald Gwinn	Member
1SG (Ret) Warren G. Harris	Member
SGM (Ret) Donald Norris	Member
MAJ (Ret) Donald W. Struve	Member
CW3 (Ret) Mack C. West	Member

b. Nonvoting Members:

LTC Bridget C. Niehus	DCofS, G1, Representative
Mr. Rick Calnon	Representing Mr. James Call, IMA-E Representative
Mr. R. Wayne McEntire	USAREUR RSO
CPT Eunice Sohn	Representing Mr. Glen L. Snow, AG Representative

3. Opening Remarks.

a. The President welcomed the assembly, especially MSG Harris who was attending his first meeting as a member of the Council, and noted the excused absence of SFC Blackwell.

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- b. Council reviewed and approved the proposed agenda.
- 4. Approval of Minutes. Council approved the minutes of the 4 February 2004 meeting as written. President requested Director, IMA-E, be included in the distribution of the minutes.
- 5. President's Report.

- a. The President had office calls with the following individuals:

BG Russell L. Frutiger	DCofS, G1, USAREUR
Mr. Russell Hall	Director, Europe Region,
	U.S. Army Installation Management Agency
COL Jon Finke	Commander, 1 st Personnel Command /
	Adjutant General, USAREUR
COL Timothy Quinn	Commander, 80 th Area Support Group
COL E. Douglas Earle	Deputy Director, Europe Region
	U.S. Army Installation Management Agency
COL Casey Jones	Deputy Commander, US Army Europe Regional
	Medical Command
COL Brian Bocklage	Provost Marshal, USAREUR
COL (Ret) Charles T. Westpheling	President, 80 th ASG (Chievres) Local Retiree
	Council
Mr. Robert Dunn	Special Assistant to the Judge Advocate,
	USAREUR
Ms. Anne Marie Murray	Chief, Future, DCofS, G1, USAREUR
Mr. William Hilscher	Director of Postal Operations, 1 st Personnel
	Command

- b. Highlights of the meetings were:

(1) Mr. Dunn offered to host a meeting of subject matter experts to review the results of a recent Germany tax court decision with regard to the tax liability of individuals who were previously considered "a member of the force" by virtue of having been declared a Technical Expert. Many of these individuals retired from the military in Europe and immediately began work for a civilian contractor. The purpose of the meeting would be to formulate information to be provided to retirees who may find themselves in similar situations.

(2) Mr. Hall offered to provide a desk at the USAREUR Retiree Appreciation Day to enroll retirees, their family members and survivor spouses in the Installation Access Control System (IACS).

- c. The President announced office calls scheduled with the following individuals:

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LTG William E. Ward
CSM Michael L. Gravens
LTC Joseph P. Moore

Deputy Commanding General, USAREUR
Command Sergeant Major, USAREUR
Acting Commander, 100th ASG /
Commander, 409th BSB

d. A USAREUR retiree brought to the President's attention the inability to access from a local computer the Army Retirement Services and Survivor Benefit Plan websites, maintained by the Army Retirement Services Office. The President asked the Army Retirement Services Officer to investigate the report with the goal of providing access to all computer users, perhaps through Army Knowledge on Line. He reported in April that he is working to solve the problem.

e. The Army Retirement Services Officer reported in April that he is still working to eliminate the problems with preparing accurate, usable address labels for mailing the Army Echoes to overseas addresses.

6. DCoFS, G1, Report. LTC Niehus reported:

a. R&R flights are now flown by charter airline. In addition, family members of deployed soldiers have been given a higher priority. The combined results are fewer seats being available for retirees.

b. The documents to realign the Personnel Services function in theater are now in the final staffing phase. The current situation is the people performing the retirement services function are in the ASGs and BSBs, subordinate organizations of IMA-E, but the oversight of policies and procedures remains with 1st PERSCOM, a subordinate command of USAREUR. The Council expressed concern that services may start to slide.

7. IMA-E Report. Mr. Calnon reported:

a. There will be three major announcements to be released on 13 May 2004 that will effect how IMA-E is organized.

b. AFAP issues in theater have been finalized. The President asked if there were any retiree issues that had reached the USAREUR level and that the Council be given the opportunity to provide input on those issues for consideration. Mr. Calnon agreed to provide feedback.

c. The Council recommended that the AG coordinate with IMA-E to ensure appropriate participation by local RSOs in the RSO training being offered by 1st PERSCOM.

8. Adjutant General Report. Mr. McEntire reported on the USAREUR Retiree Actions Implementation Plan:

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a. Coordinate with USAREUR Retiree Council (Priority 1): [Use the Council for coordinating actions affecting the retirees, their family members and annuitants; reinforce within the staff the use of the Council in this role.] The AG continues to support this aspect of the plan and will coordinate with the Council when appropriate.

b. Update USAREUR Regulation 608-25, Retirement Services Program (Priority 1): [Publish an update to USAREUR Regulation 608-25, dated 31 October 1991.] The document, now the Army in Europe Supplement 1 to AR 600-8-7 was published on 17 September 2003. A number of limited changes were made in Change 1 published in January 2004.

c. HQDA DCSPER Letter "Support for the Retired Community" (Priority 1): [Endorse to ASG and BSB commander the annual HQDA letter "Support for the Retired Community."] Department of the Army issued the 2004 letter in March, addressing it to all major subordinate commanders. USAREUR has not yet published letter forwarding the HQDA letter. Council requested that the AG initiate the letter, in coordination with IMA-E, to ASG/BSB commanders.

d. USAREUR Retirement Services Web Site (Priority 1): [Update and maintain a USAREUR/1st PERSCOM Retirement Services Web Page.] Council recommended the USAREUR RSO post the Council minutes in PDF format. Mr. McEntire agreed to do this.

e. USAREUR Retiree Bulletin (Priority 2): [Continue to publish a semiannual USAREUR Retiree Bulletin targeted to the retiree/annuitant population in the USAREUR geographical area of responsibility.] Next bulletin is to be published in June. It was agreed that the Council would provide the RSO input by the end of May. Council members need to provide their recommended subjects to the Vice President by 21 May. In addition, the Council recommended again that a list server be established to allow the RSO to send electronically the bulletin, among other documents, to interested retirees and annuitants.

f. Tri-Service Coordination Meeting (Priority 2): [Support and participate in the Semi-Annual Meetings of the Tri-Service Coordinating Meeting of Military Retiree Councils in Europe.] President is working with USEUCOM and his counterparts in the other components to have a meeting in the fall.

g. USAREUR Guidance to Casualty Assistance Officers on Death Certificates: (Priority 2): [Publish USAREUR-unique guidance to supplement the HQDA Casualty Assistant Officer's Guide.] No specific issues known to 1st PERSCOM at this time. Issue will be addressed at the RSO training later in May.

h. Breakout by BSBs of German Postal Code/Army Post Offices (Priority 2): [Provide periodically to USAREUR RSOs a list of retirees and annuitants in their areas of responsibility.] Council has produced a template that is available for use and would like to have it made available to ASGs and BSBs. IMA-E committed to take the data and provide it to appropriate commanders.

i. Local Retiree Council (LRC) Presidents/Retirement Service Officers (RSO) Standardized Email Accounts. (Priority 3): [Provide guidance to promote the creation of generic email address for RSOs and LRC presidents.] A generic address format has been set up, although it may vary by ASG. The Council recommended IMA-E considers establishing a consistent system.

j. Local Retiree Council (LRC) Minutes/Appointment (Priority 3): [Maintain current LRC minutes and appointment documents IAW UR 608-25. Not all LRCs appear to be complying with Army in Europe Supplement 1 to AR 600-8-7, which requires LRC appointment documents and minutes to be provided to the AG.] Four LRCs have provided current minutes to the USAREUR RSO - 6th ASG (Stuttgart), 98th ASG (Würzburg), 233rd BSB (Darmstadt), and 280th BSB (Schweinfurt). All other LRCs are in arrears.

9. Progress Reports.

a. Retiree Council Liaison Matrix and Individual Liaison Report: [Although Council recognizes that its members do not directly “represent” the communities in which they may reside, the matrix identifies leaders with whom Council members should maintain liaison regarding retiree services and issues.] COL Boylan briefed the quarterly results. Realignment of responsibilities will be discussed between COL Mentell and COL Boylan.

b. Retiree Mini-Survey: COL Phillips reported that two hundred participants at the 2003 USAREUR Retiree Appreciation Day and from a similar event in Wiesbaden submitted responses (83% retirees, 11% spouses, and 7% surviving spouses) and that the results of survey from 22nd ASG have not been returned. A preliminary analysis revealed the following: Sixty-one percent of respondents reported having access to email services. This fact reinforces the recommendation of the Council to the AG to use electronic means to convey information to retirees and annuitants. Council recommended that feedback be provided at the 2004 USAREUR RAD but that no mini-survey be conducted.

c. Draft of AERC Constitution and By-Laws: LTC Dick reported no significant changes from previous draft version. He will provide electronic copies to Council members for review, acknowledging that changes in staff alignment may require changes in the wording.

10. Special Reports. Mr. McEntire reported:

a. USAREUR Retiree Appreciation Day 2003 After Action Report: Mr. Snow has the after action report. Council requested that it receive a copy when it is published so it may provide input.

b. USAREUR Retiree Appreciation Day 2004: The event is scheduled for 11 September at the Village Pavilion, Patrick Village, Heidelberg. Mr. John Radke, the Army Retirement

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Services Officer, will be the guest speaker. Also invited to speak are the following: Commander, US Army Europe Regional Medical Command; Commander, US Army Europe Regional Dental Command; and the President, Army in Europe Retiree Council. Coordination with service agencies, such as Social Security, Veterans Administration, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, is ongoing. Council again stated its interest in participating in IPRs.

c. Retirement Services Officer Training: Training is presently scheduled for 19-21 May. In addition to the scheduled training, the Council president will make a presentation.

11. Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council. The President reported that the council considered 39 issues submitted by Army installations world-wide.

a. Health Care and Communication and Education were again this year the two main issues in the report to the Chief of Staff.

(1) In Health Care, the Council recommended improvements with four objectives: Continuation of TRICARE Improvement, Expansion of Retiree Dental Insurance Program to OCONUS, Waiver of Penalties for Late Enrollment in Medicare Part B, and Closer Working Relationship between DOD and DVA on Health Care.

(2) In Communications and Education, the Council recommended improvements with two objectives: Quarterly Funding of "Army Echoes" and Communications and Information sharing through Diverse Media.

b. Six other issues were considered important enough to be included in the report to the Chief: 1) Resourcing of high quality health care, 2) Elimination of the Social Security and the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offsets to Survivor Benefit Plan benefits and acceleration of the implementation date for the paid-up provision of the Plan, 3) Authorization and funding of the current receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation, 4) Modernization of the Reserve Component retiree system, 5) Establishment of procedures for direct deposit of retired and annuity pay to foreign banks, and 6) Authorization for retirees to purchase all items sold in Military Clothing Sales Stores.

c. All six issues proposed by USAREUR were supported by the Council, i.e., Medical Passenger Initiative, Direct Deposit to Foreign Banks, Weight Restriction on APO/FPO Usage, Waiver of Medicare Part B Penalty, Concurrent Receipt, and Receipt of Army Echoes. The first four issues were recommended by the 22nd ASG (Vicenza), the only ASG that provided input.

d. As a major change in how issues supported by the Council are handled, the Chief of Staff directed that they be passed to the Director of the Army Staff for appropriate tasking to the responsible staff section.

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12. Well-Being Steering Committee Meeting (LTC Dick). LTC Dick represented the Council president at the meeting, which was chaired by BG Frutiger, DCofS, G1, USAREUR. Contractors are now considered constituents of Well-Being. A copy of the draft charter of the steering committee and the draft of the program provided and input requested will be provided.

13. Liaison Discussion.

a. Medical/Dental Access: Access to medical care varies by location. Some clinics have been forced to severely restrict access by retirees because of deployments while other clinics have been able to maintain or improve routine access. Access to dental care remains unchanged.

b. Update on Local Retiree Councils: CW3 West provided an update on local retiree councils. SGM Norris reported that a LRC has been established in the 279th BSB (Bamberg) and that one is about to be established in the 235th BSB (Ansbach). 1SG Gwinn reported that retirees in Kaiserslautern are considering forming a combined Army / Air Force local retiree council.

c. Update on Local Retiree Associations (Mr. Gambert): No report.

14. Council Administration.

a. Existing Member Vacancies: There is one existing vacancy. The Council could take no action on the only pending nomination - from the 22nd ASG - as the Council has not received a recommendation signed by the ASG commander.

b. Projected member vacancies: There are two projected vacancies - CW4 Gambert as of 31 December 2004 and COL Boylan as of 31 March 2005. The Council decided to take no action on the vacancies.

c. Unprojected Member Vacancies: None

d. Projected Officer Vacancies: There are two projected vacancies - President and Vice President both as of 30 June 2004 and Secretary as of 31 December 2004.

(1) By secret ballot, the Council decided to recommend to the AG that COL Mentell be non-competitively reappointed as President for a two-year term beginning on 1 July 2004.

(2) By secret ballot, the Council decided to recommend to the AG that COL Phillips be non-competitively reappointed as Vice President for a two-year term beginning on 1 July 2004.

(3) The Council decided to take no action on the position of Secretary.

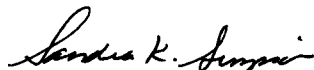
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e. Unprojected Officer Vacancies: None

15. Timeline for AERC Administrative Actions. COL Phillips reviewed short-fuse taskers to members. USAREUR RSO will forward to Council members electronic copies of the report of the Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council and on Long Term Health Care.

16. Selection of Next Meeting Date and Adjournment. The Council agreed to hold its next meeting on 4 August 04. The President adjourned the meeting at 1630 hours.


SANDRA SIMPSON
CW3, USA Retired
Secretary


R. WAYNE MCENTIRE
USAREUR Retirement Services
Officer